

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6827

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TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF 1975 AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS: ANOTHER
ABSOLUTE MAJORITY FOR SOCIALISTS

REF: VIENNA 8445

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SOCIALISTS (SPO) AGAIN WON ABSOLUTE
MAJORITY WITH SLIGHT INCREASE IN THEIR PERCENTAGE OF
VOTES WHILE TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES PEOPLE'S (OVP) AND
FREEDOM PARTY (FPO) REGISTERED MINOR LOSSES. ELECTION
OUTCOME ATTESTS TO EXTRAORDINARY POLITICAL STABILITY
OF AUSTRAI AND TO WIDE POPULARITY AMONG ELECTORATE OF
ITS MODERATE SOCIALIST LEADER CHANCELLOR KREISKY. BASED
ON OCTOBER 5 VOTE, SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN NEXT PARLIAMENT
WOULD BE: SPO: 94; OVP: 78; FPO: 11;. ABSENTEE BALLOT
COUNT ON OCTOBER 7 IS, HOWEVER, LIKELY TO CHANGE
COMPOSITION SLIGHTLY TO SPO: 93 (93SEATS IN 1971-1975
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PARLIAMENT); OVP: 79 (80) ; FPO: 11 (10). END EFFECT

WOULD BE SHIFT OF ONE SEAT WITHIN OPPOSITION CAMP. HOWEVER IN VIEW OF EARLIER GENERALLY ANTICIPATED MINOR DECLINE IN SOCIALIST VOTER SUPPORT, OUTCOME OF BALLOTING REPRESENTS MAJOR VICTORY FOR SOCIALISTS AND BIG PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT FOR TWO OPPOSITION PARTIES. CHANCELLOR KREISKY ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 5 THAT HE WILL STAY WITH SINGLE PARTY SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT AND WILL NOT CHANGE COMPOSITION OF GOVERNMENT UNTIL NEXT YEAR. HE SAID POLICIES OF NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD FOLLOW GENERALLY THOSE OF OUTGOING ONE. END SUMMARY.

2. KREISKY-LED SOCIALISTS AGAIN WON ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF VOTES, INCREASING THEIR PERCENTAGE OF VOTES OVER 1971 BY 0.57 PERCENT; OPPOSITION OVP UNDERWENT SMALL DECLINE (-.33) IN PERCENTAGE OF VOTES AS WELL AS FPO (-.07). VOTER TURNOUT WAS OVER 90 PERCENT OF MORE THAN 5 MILLION ELIGIBLE VOTERS. FOLLOWING IS DISTRIBUTION IN PERCENTAGE OF VALID VOTES:
SPO: 50.61 PERCENT (50.04 IN 1971); OVP: 42.78 (43.11); FPO: 5.38 (5.45); COMMUNIST PARTY (KPO): 1W KQMEYLV GROUP REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS IN VIENNA: 997 VOTES AND STEINACHER LIST IN SALZBURG: 429 VOTES.

3. ON BASIS OF FOREGOING INCOMPLETE RETURNS, SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN NEXT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE: SPO: 94; OVP: 78; FPO: 11. HOWEVER, ABOUT 270,000 ABSENTEE BALLOTS REMAIN TO BE COUNTED AND BASED ON PAST COUNT DISTRIBUTION, NEXT PARLIAMENT WILL MORE LIKELY HAVE FOLLOWING COMPOSITION: SPO : 93 SEATS (93 SEATS IN 1971-75 PARLIAMENT); OVP: 70 (80); FPO: 11 (10). FOREGOING PROBABLE FINAL ACCOUNT WOULD MEAN ARITHMETICALLY THAT SHIFT OF ONE SEAT TOOK PLACE FROM OVP TO FPO BUT THAT SEAT DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN GOVERNING SOCIALIST PARTY AND OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED, NAMELY 93 VERSUS 90.

4. ELECTION MATHEMATICS, HOWEVER, DO NOT FULLY REFLECT IMPACT OF ELECTION OUTCOME WHICH AMOUNTS TO MAJOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT FOR BOTH OVP AND FPO. OVP HAD EXPECTED TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION SUFFICIENTLY
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TO PREVENT RECONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE PARTY SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WHILE FPO ANTICIPATED, AGAIN ON BASIS OF EXPECTED MINOR LOSSES BY SOCIALISTS, PLAYING ROLE OF SOUGHT-AFTER COALITION PARTNER AND BECOMING IN END JUNIOR PARTNER IN SPO-FPO COALITION. BOTH EXPECTATIONS HOWEVER HAVE NOT BEEN REALIZED; INSTEAD, BOTH PARTIES NOW FACE FOUR MORE YEARS IN OPPOSITION.

5. PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF RETURNS INDICATE THAT AUSTRIAN VOTERS PREFERRED WELL-KNOWN FATHER IMAGE OF KREISKY TO THAT OF YOUNG SUCCESSFUL BANK DIRECTOR (OVP LEADER TAUS) UNTESTED, HOWEVER, POLITICALLY. SOCIALIST THEME OF INSURING JOB SECURITY BY ALL MEANS SEEMS TO HAVE HAD MAJOR IMPACT AMONG VOTERS IN SEVERAL MAJOR INDUSTRIAL AREAS CONCERNED ABOUT GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT, WHERE OVP LOSSES RAN ABOVE AVERAGE. OVP ELECTION DEFEAT ATTRIBUTED IN PART TO TURNOVER AT TOP TWO MONTHS BEFORE ELECTIONS IN WAKE OF PARTY CHAIRMAN'S DEATH AND POSSIBLY TO CALCULATED DECISION NOT TO ENGAGE IN IDEOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION WITH SOCIALISTS ON ISSUES OF ABORTION-ON-DEMAND, MEDIA REFORM, CRIMINAL REFORM AND UNIVERSITY REORGANIZATION; ALL ITEMS OF MAJOR CONTROVERSY IN OUTGOING PARLIAMENT. PEOPLE'S PARTY POSITION ALSO COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT TACTICS OF CAMPAIGN INVOLVED DESCRIBING IN HIGHLY PESSIMISTIC TERMS OUTLOOK FOR ECONOMY WHILE OFFERING AT SAME TIME PROMISE, IF GIVEN MANDATE BY VOTERS, TO ENTER COALITION WITH SOCIALIST, WHO ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL ILLS OF ECONOMY.

6. IN VICTORY STATEMENT EVENING OCTOBER 5, KREISKY SAID HE WILL FORM SINGLE PARTY SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT AND THAT COMPOSITION OF NEXT GOVERNMENT WILL BE SAME AS OUTGOING ONE, AT LEAST INTO NEXT YEAR. PERSONNEL CHANGES WILL THEN BE MADE AS APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY. ON FUTURE GOVERNMENT POLICY, KREISKY INDICATED THAT HE HAD WON ON A TICKET OF PROMISING ELECTORATE MORE OF SAME, AND THAT HE DID NOT THEREFORE ANTICIPATE ANY CHANGE IN FOREIGN POLICY OR ANY MAJOR SHIFT IN DOMESTIC POLICIES. IN SUM, AUSTRIAN VOTERS ENDORSED KREISKY AND HIS MODERATE POLICIES AS BEST GUARANTEE OF CONTINUED

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POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING IN AUSTRIA.

7. LEADERSHIPS OF THREE POLITICAL PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT SCHEDULED TO MEET THIS WEEK FOR ANALYSIS OF ELECTION RETURNS AND FOR SETTING OUT PARTY POLICY FOR NEXT PERIOD. RESIGNATION OF OUTGOING KREISKY GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE IN NEXT DAYS AND NEW GOVERNMENT MAY BE SWORN IN NEXT WEEK, ACCORDING TO CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE.

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